

Deerfield Conservation Commission 2014 Annual Report

The **Deerfield Conservation Commission (DCC)** is a volunteer board with members appointed for three year terms by the Board of Selectmen. State Law *RSA 36-A* calls for the establishment of conservation commissions for the “*proper utilization and protection of natural resources and the protection of watershed resources.*” The commission may also, with approval by the Select Board, acquire land as conservation areas or town forests, and then manage those areas. Primary work by DCC members and volunteers for 2014 is outlined below:

LAND CONSERVATION

The DCC’s most notable accomplishment of 2014 was the completion and recording of the Conservation Easement Deed for seven Town Forests and Conservation Areas. This document was three years in the making, and on June 30, 2014, the deed was finally signed by the Deerfield Board of Selectmen and its conservation partner, Bear-Paw Regional Greenways. A Public Hearing had been held in May 2014 to provide information and accept public input on the easement which now conveys permanent protection to over 500 acres of town-owned land, and, in keeping with the wishes of its former owners, will ensure that it be enjoyed by Deerfield’s future generations in perpetuity. The following parcels are protected by the deed:

Arthur Chase Town Forest	Tax Map 414 Lot 73	40 Acres
Dowst-Cate Town Forest	Tax Map 416 Lot 16	100 Acres
Hart Town Forest	Tax Map 403 Lot 2	71 Acres
Lindsay Conservation Area	Tax Map 415 Lot 30	58 Acres
McNeil Conservation Area	Tax Map 406 Lot 12	63 Acres
Weiss Town Forest	Tax Map 416 Lot 18	93 Acres
Wells Town Forest	Tax Map 411 Lot 39	80 Acres

After its 2012 acquisition of ~178 acres of land (Map 404 Lot 002), located off Dow Road, the DCC was successful in receiving the approval of the Town to name the Edythe H. Boisvert Conservation Area a Town Forest. Passage of the warrant article in March of 2014 not only conferred the status of Town Forest on the property, but also further allowed for the conveyance of an easement which, in keeping with the former owner’s wishes, will guarantee that it be conserved in perpetuity while continuing to be owned and managed by the Town. DCC will begin the easement process early in 2015.

DCC continues to review opportunities for the acquisition of private land that enhances the creation of greenways and provides suitable wildlife habitat, in keeping with Deerfield’s *Open Space Plan* and its *Wildlife Action Plan*. DCC encourages the donation of conservation easements as a means of preserving the land.

STEWARDSHIP

DCC, through its members and volunteers, continues to monitor the Town’s Forests and Conservation Areas to ensure that they are in compliance with the terms of their respective easements. Oversight and maintenance of the trails, including re-blazing and bridge repair, is ongoing, and DCC routinely addresses reported easement violations related to their use.

The DCC continues its efforts, in cooperation with the Forestry Committee and a professional forester, to conduct a Town Forest inventory and develop a forestry management plan for our Town Forests. To date, the DCC has received completed management plans for five of the Town Forests and Conservation Areas, which can be found on the DCC web page of the Town website, at townofdeerfieldnh.com. The DCC provided the initial funding to enable this project.

DCC has worked to educate residents in employing best management practices for their land, informing them about the existence of and threats posed by invasive plants, recommending erosion-control techniques and employing soil analysis. DCC has been able to benefit from the resources provided by the University of New Hampshire, partnering with its students who have put their knowledge and skills to work in the accomplishment of these efforts.

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

DCC strives to address the concerns of residents who have come to the Commission for advice and support, and routinely reviews activity affecting *Shoreland Protection* and *Regulated Wetlands*. In addition, the DCC continues to partner with neighboring towns in their mutual efforts to protect common waterbodies such as Pleasant Lake and the Lamprey River. Entities with which the DCC routinely partners are:

- The Board of Selectmen on easements and other DCC activities
- Town Energy Committee
- Forestry Committee, for planning forest stewardship and timber harvests on town forests
- Planning Board and Town Planner
- Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
- Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)
- Lamprey River Watershed Association
- Southern NH Planning Commission Natural Resource Advisory Committee
- Town officials to keep residents informed by publishing the DCC minutes, members list and trail maps on the town website

In March of 2014, the DCC approved the formation of a six-member Trails Committee. It is hoped that this new arm of the DCC will spark interest in the use and care of Deerfield's extensive network of trails by increasing awareness and encouraging public enjoyment, not only of these scenic footpaths, but of all of the Town's wonderful natural resources. Maps of the existing trails can also be found on the DCC webpage of the Town website.

2014 DCC MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

DCC members are volunteers who give freely of their time in service to the Town. Serita Frey is the Chair and Erick Berglund is the Financial Officer. Deb Campelia, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett, Dave Linden, and Jim Deely are members. Frank Mitchell and Al Jaeger contribute their time for easement monitoring and assisting with land protection projects. Alan Perkins volunteers his time for trail maintenance and has cleared and blazed trails on several Town-owned conservation properties. Herb McKinney directs his energies toward "tagging" the Town Forest perimeters. Kelly Roberts was the architect of and continues to be the creative force behind the Conservation Commission webpage at townofdeerfieldnh.com. Judy Marshall is the DCC clerk, providing outstanding organizational support to the Commission. The DCC meets on the second Monday of each month at 7 pm. Interested citizens are always welcome to attend the meetings. Volunteers are also sought to assist with various conservation-related tasks and projects.